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**USTR ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES
AND MEXICO ON EXCHANGE OF PRODUCT SAFETY TEST DATA
FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT**

United States Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky announced today the conclusion of an agreement with the Government of Mexico on an exchange of product safety test data for telecommunications equipment. The agreement was finalized through an exchange of letters between Ambassador Barshefsky and the Mexican Secretary of Commerce and Industrial Development, Herminio Blanco Mendoza which confirmed an understanding reached in negotiations last month.

“The NAFTA continues to prove its value as an effective agreement in opening markets and providing new opportunities for U.S. exports,” Ambassador Barshefsky said. “This agreement will help expand our export opportunities in telecommunications trade with Mexico.”

The North American Free Trade Agreement requires that parties have procedures in place to accept test data relating to telecommunications equipment from other parties’ laboratories or test facilities. In order to establish this procedure for test data exchanged between the United States and Mexico, both governments agreed to allow for private sector agreements between Mexican and U.S. testing laboratories which will permit the exchange of test data between the participating partner laboratories in each country.

With the completion of this agreement, laboratories in the United States and Mexico may test telecommunications equipment in accordance with the other’s testing procedures for conformity with their product safety standards. For example, after reviewing the data received from a U.S. partner laboratory, a laboratory in Mexico will present the results to a certifying body for the purpose of obtaining necessary certification approvals. For data produced by a Mexican laboratory, the U.S. laboratory is similarly responsible for completing the certification processes

necessary for approval.

Thus, the agreement guarantees that certifying bodies will accord national treatment to test data. All certification procedures and product safety standards of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in the United States and of the Sistema Nacional de Acreditamiento de Laboratorios de Pruebas in Mexico will be recognized.

The United States exported approximately \$900 million to Mexico in telecommunications equipment last year. It is expected that telecommunications trade will grow even further with this agreement which expedites and simplifies procedures for gaining product safety certification for telecommunications equipment.